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of Egypt consisted of the same screen draped with some rarely beautiful curtains loaned by an interested mother. The chair in front of it was covered with the same material. The children grouped in front of these, with their bright oriental costumes falling in soft folds because made of canton flannel and cheese cloth, made pictures long to be remembered.

The simplicity of the scenery and the costumes threw the emphasis on the children and their interpretation of the story. From the first they felt that this was no ordinary play but one to be approached with reverence and lived, because they already loved it. They were quite unconscious of themselves but were too young to fully enter into the passions of hatred, power, or supreme forgiveness. Still the essentially great is always worthy of reflection, even in imperfect mirrors, and the effect on the audience, which perhaps is the best test, was a great surprise even to those who had lived with the children and felt the power of the story.

The value of such work is very well worth while.

ANNA MANSFIELD CLARK

NEW YORK CITY

The Summers Readers, Primer, First Reader, and Teachers' Manual. By MAUD SUMMERS. Illustrated by LUCY FITCH PERKINS AND MARION L. MAHONY. New York: Frank D. Beattys & Co.

This series is one of the best that has been produced of late for beginning work in reading. It is far better in our estimation than an earlier work of the same author, *The Thought Reader*, being richer in content and more psychological in treatment. The *Primer* contains short sentences built on familiar experiences and on children's rhymes and also simple commands for movements to be carried out by the children. The *First Reader* contains familiar fairy-tales, rhymes, poems, descriptions of such activities as maple-sugar making, and carpentering, with some "observation lessons" from nature. These are all well chosen and well told and form a valuable addition to our list of First Readers, in which there are too few that are as full of interest and still simple enough for the beginners.

In her *Manual* Miss Summers sets forth most clearly her idea of the process involved in learning to read, and her mode of simplifying and strengthening the elements in the process. She takes up the subject under three headings: Thought, Symbol, and Phonics, treating each element fully with ample illustrations, and without wearisome detail. She places thought first as the all important goal in the teaching of reading and demands that the association of symbol and thought, or symbol and image, be made while idea is vividly present in the child's mind. To this end she recommends the use of script reading from the blackboard from the beginning, with a transition to the printed page, to be made whenever the children show a measurable degree of readiness in reading the script. Her treatment of phonics is full of good suggestions and free of the burdens of technicalities. She deplors the early use of diacritical marks as a useless cumbering of the image. The author emphasizes the prime interest which action has for the little child and develops the first reading lessons through an appeal to his love of performing even the simplest movements at command. To the

mind of the reviewer this is a useful device among other devices, but is in danger of being over-worked, or magnified out of its real importance. The earlier pages of the *Primer*, also, do not quite bear out the author's own theory of the value of *thinking*. Some of the lessons seem too trivial. But they are interspersed with so much that is excellently presented that it seems hardly fair to be too critical on these points. The *Primer* is good, beyond the average, and the *First Reader* merits a place in every school. The *Manual* should certainly be of great assistance to the young teacher.

The Wide Awake Third Reader. By CLARA MURRAY. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. Pp. 224. \$0.40.

This is not a story-book, but consists in part of sketches of foreign peoples and their customs as seen through the daily doings of foreign children. These include children of Holland, Armenia, Greenland, Japan, Switzerland, and Brazil. This work is excellently done, and the book would be a valuable adjunct to the supplementary reading stock of every school for this alone. Its merits do not end here, however, for there are some delightful animal, bird, and plant studies, some good poems, and the charming "Christmas Monks" of Mary E. Wilkins. Altogether it presents varied and interesting matter for children of about the third or fourth school year.

Fairy Tales, Vol. II. Compiled and Edited by MARION FLORENCE LANSING, M.A. Illustrated by CHARLES COPELAND. Ginn & Co. Pp. 180. \$0.40.

This is the second volume in a series of which two other volumes were reviewed in the December number of the *Elementary School Teacher*. The compiler states that the division of the tales into two volumes does not indicate that they are intended for children of different ages. The stories are taken about equally from Perrault, Andersen, and Grimm. She also calls attention to the discrimination of fairy tales from stories of heroic deeds which are supposed to have been carried down from some actual events in time and place. Tales of the latter class are to appear in a succeeding volume under the name, *Tales of Old England*. Like its predecessors this second volume of *Fairy Tales* is a convenient little book of well-chosen and well-told tales and is eminently suitable for school reading.

The Tortoise and the Geese and Other Fables of Bidpai. Retold by MAUDE BARROWS DUTTON. Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. Pp. 125. \$1.00.

These fables are handed down to the modern world from the obscurest of origins, from the early literature of the Orient. Tradition ascribes their authorship to one Bidpai, of India, who wrote them at the command of the king, and delivered them as a treasure into the keeping of his ruler. La Fontaine incorporated some of them into his fables. To represent the aim of this collection we quote from the compiler: "In this selection from the fables of Bidpai only a scant portion of his wisdom and his humor is offered, but it is sincerely hoped that herein lies sufficient to awaken in our children a love for this Indian sage that shall increase with the years until the name of Bidpai be ranked in their affections with Æsop."